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Keeping Control of Your Online Presence

March 9th, 2010

Just like there are a lot of things that you must keep control of in the offline part of your art business...there are a number of things that you need to be in control of if you have an online presence or if you're selling your artwork online. Unfortunately, a lot of artists give up a lot of control over their online presence simply because they don't know how certain parts of the Internet works or because they don't want to get into the technical parts of running a presence online. And this usually ends up in disaster for the artist who caught unawares. In this show I'll talk about how to keep control of your online presence and how to avoid some of the pitfalls that can take how your present yourself online out of your hands.

1. Register your own domain name...and always register it yourself -

Domain names are like digital real estate. If you wait until you're ready to build a website before you register your domain name, you might miss out permanently. You don't have to have a website in order to use a domain name, you can send email under your own domain name or forward it to your third part store or blog. You can get your own domain name for as little as \$8 per year...so there's no reason why you shouldn't have your own domain name even if your not ready to build a website yet.

2. Have more than one place online where people can contact

you...perferably a channel that you have control over, whether it's a blog, social networking site, or your own website. Websites and social networking services aren't forever. If you have multiple places where people can contact you, you increase the chance that people can find you and you have a back up if one channel disappears or goes down.

3. If someone is helping your with your website or other technical

aspects, always keep control of the login information- This applies to domain names, web hosting, social networking passwords, etc. Always be the main contact for any of these accounts instead of your assistant or web designer.

4. Come up with some good strong passwords for your various

accounts and change them regularly. Account hacking does exist and one way to combat it is to create good, strong, hard to guess passwords. You should also remember to use different passwords for each account so that if someone guesses one password, they don't have access to the rest of your accounts and change them up regularly. If you have a lot of log in information, use a program like [RoboForm](#) to help you organize your passwords and login information.

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facebook

5. **Keep backups of everything**- Blog posts, customer data, email addresses, sales data...losing any of this information can spell disaster for you. Keep regular backups of all of this information on a weekly basis ...especially if they reside on a third party system.



Tags: art marketing, crafts marketing | Leave a comment

Blogging: Choosing a Blogging Service for Your Art Blog

February 25th, 2010

There's a lot of choices in services and software to start and run your art blog including Blogger, Typepad, Wordpress, LiveJournal, Squarespace and more. So what's the best choice for your blog? The service or software you choose for your blog depends on a number of different factors including cost, features, and ease of use. Here is some information about different types of blogging services and software available and how to choose the right one for your art blog.

Blogging services vs self hosting

- **Blogging service**- this includes services like Blogger, Wordpress.com, LiveJournal, etc. A blogging service is something that you sign up to get your blog. A blogging service is responsible for hosting your blog, providing features, doing upgrades, and maintaining the technical side of your blog.
- **Self hosting**- this includes blogging software like Wordpress.org, Moveable Type, Mambo, Drupal that runs on a web server that you manage.

Free vs paid services

- **Free**- some blogging services (Blogger, Wordpress.com, LiveJournal, Vox) and software (Wordpress.org, Mambo, Drupal) are completely free. Many of these services make money by putting advertising on your blog.
- **Paid**- other blogging services (Typepad, Squarespace, Wordpress.com) will charge a monthly fee to host and maintain the technical aspects of your blog. Some services such as Wordpress.com offer a free basic service and will charge for additional features.

Factors to consider

- **cost**- how much are you budgeted to spend on your blog (hosting, monthly fee, set up, domain name)? Are you willing to pay for a monthly service? Are you willing to help someone help you set up a self hosted blog?
- **ease of use**- how much technical expertise do you have? Are you willing to maintain the technical parts of your blog if you decide to self host? Do you have the technical expertise to install your own blog or would you rather use a service that takes care of this for you?
- **features**- what kind of features do you want for your blog? Do you want a custom look for your blog or can you use a generic theme? Do you want your blog to match your website completely? Do you want the ability to sell from your blog? A photo gallery? Show videos? Add a mailing list sign up? If you're using a blogging service, the features you can have on your blog is controlled by the service.

Proofing Your Art Business
Marketing Your Art Online:
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Art Marketing: Handling Art
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- **control**- how much control do you want to have over how your blog runs and looks? Some blog hosting services have a terms of service control what you can and can't do on your blog (eg. using your blog to make sales, subject matter of your blog, etc). Plus, if the blogging service shuts down, then you can lose your blog.

If you're thinking about starting a blog or if you already have a blog and you want to be more effective, sign up for my **FREE** e-course "[50 Blogging Tips for Artists](#)". Get a free tip in your email every day that will help make your blogging life easier. [Sign up now!](#)



Tags: art blogging, art business, blog marketing, blogging, blogging tips, crafts marketing | [Leave a comment](#)

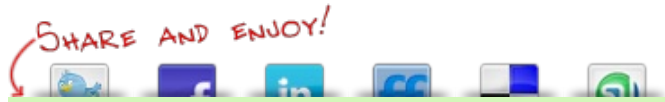
Email Marketing: Email Etiquette for Art Business

February 23rd, 2010

Despite what everyone is saying about the death of email because of social networking, email is still a critical component when it comes to marketing your work online. So are you putting your best foot forward in your emails? Or are you projecting yourself as unprofessional, amateurish, or even worse ...rude in your email communications? Here are some tips to make your email communications as professional as possible.

- 1. Always email from your own domain**- Be sure to get your own domain name, set up an email account, and send all of your emails from that domain. It looks a lot more professional than an Gmail or a Yahoo! account.
- 2. Be careful with humor and other hard to convey emotions in emails**- Humor doesn't translate well over email. People aren't there to translate emotions from your face. So don't attempt to be humorous or sarcastic in your business emails.
- 3. Get to the point**- Businesses get a lot of email. Whoever you're sending email to...make their job easier by getting right to the point. No long and rambling emails!
- 4. Ask before sending images**- Sending a bunch of email slowing images of your work is one sure way to annoy whoever is receiving them. Before you send images of your work through email, ask if it's okay and ask what format they should be in.
- 5. Optimize your images for email**- Make sure the images you send through email are formatted (size, file size, file format) so they don't clog up the recipient's inbox. Here is a [good article on how to properly format your images for your website and email](#).
- 6. Include a signature in your outgoing email**- Make sure your signature has your name, company name, email, web address, and other important information and goes out with all of your outgoing email.
- 7. Spell check and grammar check...and leave the acronyms alone** - Nothing screams unprofessional than an email filled with misspellings, grammar errors and acronyms like OMG and TTY.
- 8. Regularly check and answer your email** - This should go without saying. Don't give out an email address that you don't check and answer on a regular basis.

9. Don't email when a phone call or face to face contact would be better- You don't have to conduct ALL of your business through email. If the situation is too complex for an email, pick up the phone...or if your contact is local, set up a meeting. Sometimes a phone call or a face-to-face meeting will do better than a long confusing email.



Tags: art business, art marketing, crafts marketing, email, email etiquette |
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Social Networking: Why You Should NOT Use Social Networking to Promote Your Art

February 18th, 2010

Twitter, Facebook, and now Google Buzz...social networking has certainly been the buzz on the internet for the past few years. If you have an online presence for your art, then you've no doubt heard that you need to be on at least one of these networks. Or do you? Do you HAVE to jump on the social networking bandwagon in order to promote your artwork online? In this show, I'll talk about 5 reasons you might want to avoid using social networking to promote your artwork

1. Your customers aren't on social networks- While there are a lot of people online, not all of them are using Facebook or Twitter. As of August 2009, it's estimated that 17% of the time spent online is on social network sites like Facebook or on blogs. If you have an audience that's not social networking savvy or an audience that don't spend a lot of time on the computer, then social networking might not be a priority for you.

Reality check- That 17% figure cited had actually increased by 6% from the previous year. Keep in mind that while your current customers aren't there now...there's nothing saying that they won't be in the future...plus there's a chance that you're ignoring potential **new** customers.

2. You're too busy creating art- While it's important to market your art, you also have to make sure that you're spending enough time in your studio so that you actually have something to market. Social networking can be an enormous time sink if you're not careful.

3. You hate being on the computer- If you only use your computer to check email and avoid it like the plague the rest of the time, you're not going to be really excited to spend even more time setting up a Facebook page or taking time to tweet about your latest work...and your lack of excitement will show.

4. You've tried it and not gotten any results- If you've already been on these social networks and don't seem to get any results, then there's nothing wrong with moving on to other techniques that will yield better results.

Reality check- a good honest effort is more than just a month or two of sporadically tweeting or logging onto your Facebook page. Just like any other method of marketing, social networking does take time.

5. You're doing quite well without it- You're selling out at shows, you're getting plenty of sales on Etsy, and you're always filling in orders with your gallery accounts...so whatever you're doing now is working just fine.

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Tags: art business, art marketing, marketing art online, selling art online, selling crafts online, social networking | [Leave a comment](#)

Art Blogging: 7 Ways You Can Improve Your Art Blog

February 16th, 2010

Is your art blog the best that it can possibly be? Whether you have a blog on Wordpress, Typepad, or Blogger, there are things that you can do that will attract more readers, encourage more comments, and most importantly, help you promote your artwork better! Here are 7 ways you can make your blog be all it can be.

1. Brand your blog- Make sure your blog has the clear stamp of your brand, this includes colors, fonts, logo, domain name, banner, etc. If you're using a free theme from Blogger or Wordpress, brand the look by getting a custom banner or altering the colors and fonts. But the basic rules of web design still apply!

2. Clean up your sidebars- Use widgets and sidebar graphics sparingly. It's nice to show that you're affiliated with but you don't have to show every affiliation you have. It makes your blog look messy and may slow the speed of your blog. Reserve your sidebar for important marketing features like your opt-in box, links to your website, links to other blog posts, etc.

3. Add an opt-in box- Make sure that everybody is able to sign up for your newsletter and mailing list. If you don't have a mailing list, you can learn to set one up by getting a FREE copy of my article series "[How to Plan and Start a Great Email Newsletter](#)".

4. Make your post titles SEO friendly- Avoid vague "mystery meat" titles that don't mean anything to either search engines or your visitors. Make sure that your blog post titles state clearly what your blog post is about and contains major keywords for your topic.

5. Make your blog shareable- If you have great content, make it easy for your visitors to share by adding social networking buttons to your blog. You can also share your blog on Twitter and Facebook by using services like Twitterfeed and Networked Blogs.

6. Make your blog easy for people to read - Display your RSS button in an easy to find place for your RSS subscribers for folks that like to use RSS readers. You can also use a service like Feedblitz or Feedburner to allow people to subscribe to your blog via email.

7. Don't make it all about you- Don't make every blog post about your new sale on Etsy or a plea to buy your work. [Write about real life events](#) and how it inspires your work. Ask questions from your readers. Answer comments readers leave on your blog. Ask readers what they want...write blog posts based on reader and customer questions. Remember to **interact**.

If you're thinking about starting a blog or if you already have a blog and you want to be more effective, sign up for my **FREE** e-course "[50 Blogging Tips for Artists](#)". Get a free tip in your email every day that will help make your blogging life easier. [Sign up now!](#)

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